Production of British India Corporation Limited and its subsidiary companies

*59. PROF. SAURIN BHATTACHARYA: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that some of the textile mills under the British Indian Corporation Limited and its subsidiary companies have been working much below their average capacities;

(b) whether Government's attention have been drawn to the news-item appearing in a Hindi daily "Swatantra Bharat", Kanpur of the 12th November, 1991 captioned "Lalimli Ka Utpadan 90 fisadi gira"; and

(c) if so, what are the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF (SHRI ASHOK GEHLOT): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The news-item refers to fall in production at Lal-Imli, high level of defective production, irregularities in sales and purchase of yarn. The news-item is not entirely based on facts. The plant utilisation at Lalimli has been about 32 per cent due to funds constraints and non-availability of the essential raw material. The value loss on account of defects in the finished goods at Lalimli and Dharival has been by and large contained. The management of these mills is aware of the problems and suitable remedial measures are being taken to improve the position.

Setting up of New Airports

*60. SHRI JAGADISH JANI: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have a proposal to set up some new airports during the current financial year;

(b) if so, the places identified therefor; and

(c) the amount earmarked for the construction of these airports?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI MADHAV RAO SCINDIA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Amending National Highways Act

212. SHRI KRISHAN LAL SHARMA: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the national highways in the country have become very congested;

(b) if so, what steps are being taken in this matter;

(c) whether Government propose to amend the National Highways Act and if so, by when; and

(d) whether Government also propose to involve private sector and if so, by when a final decision is likely to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER): (a) and (b) The National Highways in the country are generally in a traffic-worthy condition, though certain stretches are getting congested by traffic. Consequently, various steps are being taken to improve the capacity of National Highways in high traffic density corridors within the overall availability of funds, *viz.*,

(i) provision of paved side shoulders;

(ii) widening to 4-lane divided carriageway; and

(iii) improvement of traffic flow through proper sign boards, pavement markings, junction improvement etc.

(c) and (d) There is a tentative proposal of involving the private sector in maintenance|development| operation of National Highways in the country. However, one of the pre-requisites for private sector participation is amendment of the National Highways Act, 1956 to provide levy of fee on national Highway section, which is yet to be done in consultation with the appraisal agencies etc. It is, therefore, too early to give any indication about timing in this regard.

Direct flight to Jorhat from Delhi

213. SHRI BHADRESWAR BURAGOHAIN: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to connect Jorhat with a direct flight from Delhi in its next time schedule; and

(b) whether Government are aware that in the absence of a direct air service from Delhi to Jorhat, the commuting public has to incur extra expenditure and wastage of time while proceeding via Calcutta?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI MADHAV RAO SCINDIA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) In the existing schedule of Indian Airlines, the passengers travelling between Delhi and Jorhat have been provided with immediate connection at Guwahati, three days a week on each side.

Abolishing the restricted area permit for North East Region

214. SHRI BHADRESWAR BURAGOHAIN: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether his Ministry moved the Ministry of Home Affairs for abolishing the Restricted Area Permit from the North East in order to attract foreign tourists; and

(b) if so, what are the results thereof?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI MADHAV RAO SCINDIA): (a) The Department of Tourism has been making proposals from time to time for relaxation of the Restricted Area| Protected area regime in the North Eastern States with a view to promoting tourism.

(b) Government have made certain relaxations in the existing procedure and opened certain areas in the North Eastern States for Tourism keeping in view the security consraints.

Construction of Yatri Niwas in Assam

215. SHRI BHADRESWAR BURAGOHAIN: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to construct few Yatri Nivas for the low budget tourists in Assam; and

(b) if so, what are the places selected for the purpose.

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI MADHAV RAO SCINDIA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Guwahati.

Upgradation of Andhra Pradesh roads to National Highways

216. SHRI T. CHANDRASEKHAR REDDY: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the State Government of Andhra Pradesh have suggested to the Central Government to upgrade certain roads in the State to National highways;

(b) if so, what are the details of the same;